

PERPLEXED, NOT IN DESPAIR, AND ALWAYS CONFIDENT

*"WE ARE TROUBLED ON EVERY SIDE, YET NOT DISTRESSED;
WE ARE PERPLEXED, BUT NOT IN DESPAIR"*

(READ 2 CORINTHIANS 4)

God's dear children have not all the same clear judgment of truth, they are not all of one mind and the same sentiment in all points; yet they all have one Lord, one faith, and one hope, and there is a uniformity in their experience, in regard to the exceeding sinfulness of sin, the depravity of their nature, their perplexities from the world, the flesh, and the devil, their love of the Scriptures, and the exceeding preciousness of Christ: this proves that they are taught by one and the same Spirit. We have perplexities of a spiritual nature, beside those in common with others, which natural men are utter strangers to; these are no weak evidences of our spiritual birth. To be perplexed with a body of sin and death, with a sense of unbelief, with deadness, formality, wanderings in spiritual duties, with Satan's temptations, injections, accusations, corrupt reasonings and carnal pleadings; the feeling all these makes it manifest that the soul is born of God; and alive to God; for when dead in sin, we felt nothing of them. How exceedingly absurd and foolish, then, do many act, because thus perplexed! Oh they are ready to give up hope, cast away confidence, and deny they are God's children; but their sense of these things, and groaning under them, are evident tokens of salvation. *"Perplexed, but not in despair"* O take heed of giving the least way to despair, of desponding, of letting go your confidence in Christ, of giving up for one moment the least degree of hope in Christ; for consider the evil of this: 1. You hereby slight the everlasting love of God the Father to sinners. 2. You dishonour the work and salvation of the Son of God for sinners. 3. You grieve the Holy Spirit, the Comforter of sinners. 4. You disregard the gospel of grace, glad tidings to sinners, and set at nought all God's precious promises in Christ unto sinners. 5. You give the enemy all possible advantage over you: he stands, and cries, 'There! there! so would I have it.' 6. You give sin all its strength against you. 7. You perplex, distress, and darken your own soul, whereby you are hindered from running the way of God's commands with love and delight. A thousand evils are connected with indulging despondence; away then with all false humility, it is devilish: hold fast this faithful saying, for it is worthy of all acceptation, at all times, under all circumstances, *"Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners!"* (1 TIMOTHY 1:15). Till the devil can blot that truth out of God's word, or make you anything worse than a sinner [a self-righteous reprobate pharisee!], you, as a quickened sinner, have the same reason as Paul, or any other apostle, to say, I am *"always confident,"* (2 CORINTHIANS 5:6).

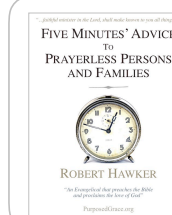
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October 7th, 2018

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SERVE THE LORD

"AS FOR ME AND MY HOUSE, WE WILL SERVE THE LORD" (JOSHUA 24:15)

Reader, art thou a parent, a father, or a master?...consider the souls of thy household as entrusted in some sort to thee, and suffer not "those souls to perish" through thy neglect, for whom Christ died. How agonizing will be the interview between such cruel and irreligious parents and their unhappy children at the last day! What dreadful reproaches! How painful the accusations which the children will throw upon them! And with what a piercing bitterness will the sound of their cries enter into their ears! and let it be observed that these matters will be in an increased proportion of evil between those tender relations, where the parent hath attended to every thing in this life for his child's interest but the "one thing needful." The more solicitous and provident he hath proved, as the father and the friend, in the concern of this world's good, the more bitter will be the reflection, for not having regarded the important concerns of a better. Let the mind conceive, if possible, the horrors with which the prayerless father will hear the accusation from the son or daughter of his own bosom, in terms perhaps like these:—"Ah, cruel parent! was this the seeming tenderness with which you studied my happiness in yonder world, in contriving every amusement and pleasure for my enjoyment, while leaving me ignorant of that in which alone true happiness is founded, and for the want of which I am miserable forever?"

Reader, art thou a parent? and dost thou call thyself a tender parent? wouldest thou be displeased to be accused of inattention to thy children's welfare? Attend, then, to that which concerns their welfare indeed! even their eternal welfare; and know, that void of this, though thou labor night and day for their earthly comfort, and though thou leave behind thee the riches worldly possessions to thy children, and to thy children's children, yet art thou infinitely worse and more foolish than the senseless ostrich of the wilderness, who "leaveth her eggs in the dust," and is regardless of every attention to her young. Oh, may the eye that reads this, if he stands neither of the relative situations of the head of a family, and among the unhappy characters who neglect household devotion, be awakened to an instant discharge of it! and may the prime mover and hearer of all prayer be graciously pleased to pour out the Spirit of supplication upon him from on high!

But perhaps thou art one, of those who art so far awakened as to feel an anxiety for thy own personal salvation, and art attending upon the means of grace thyself, but hast not set up religion in thine house. This is one of those unaccountable problems which excites the wonder of men and angels; what a contradiction is such a man's life to himself! Anxious to discharge one duty, and neglectful of all the rest! In secret serving God, but ashamed to do it openly! It would be a most unnecessary service to offer any argument upon this point. A moment's reflection is enough to convince every man of this complexion both of his iniquity and his danger. Awake, awake, therefore, from this delusion, and let not the fear of Man any longer bring a snare. Attend only to that cutting expostulation of God by the prophet, which is enough to drive out all lesser fears: "Who art thou that thou shouldst be afraid of a man that shall die, and, the son of man which shall be as grass and forgettest the Lord thy Maker?" May this awful consideration be so accompanied with divine grace as to operate to the purpose intended!

...reader, I take my leave. Farewell! Let not a stranger, and perhaps unknown; feel this concern for thy eternal salvation, and thou remain uninterested. Add but thy prayer to his, and God will bless the means to the end intended: and however the fashion of the world may be against this great duty (a world whose customs are declared enmity to God;) however "fools make a mock of sin, and scorners delight in scorning," let nothing intimidate thee from taking up the resolution of Joshua, and saying "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

[PASTOR] **ROBERT HAWKER**